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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2008

In Today's Papers

Turkey Elected for Non-Permanent Member to UNSC for 2009-2010
All weekend papers and TVs reported that Turkey was elected to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a non-permanent member for 2009-2010. Saturday's mainstream Sabah headline reads "Diplomatic Victory" and reported that PM Erdogan will go to New York in the upcoming days to thank the UN General Assembly. Saturday's mainstream Hurriyet quoted PM Erdogan as saying "Turkey's UNSC status is an important success and something every citizen should be proud of." President Gul also thanked all UN members in a written statement and said "This support to Turkey is a reflection of confidence and friendship from the international community. We will mobilize for the security, tranquility and welfare of the nations of the world." Evaluating Turkey's membership to journalists PM Erdogan said "I believe that diplomatic efforts carried out in the past five years and Turkey's contributions to peace and stability have an influence on this decision. Now we have an opportunity to undertake a more influential, and active global role." Today's Sabah reports that FM Babacan on his return to Turkey said that "This is Turkey's success. We will carry our knowledge, experience and analytical ability to the Council."

Editorial Commentary on Turkey's Membership to the UNSC
Ferai Tinc commented in mainstream Hurriyet: "Turkey is now a non-permanent member to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for two years. Turkey does not have the authority to veto, but nevertheless such status is a prestigious thing. When the United States looks at candidates for the UNSC, it takes into consideration previous votes at the UN General Assembly. In 2007, Turkey and the U.S. voted along the same line 45.5 percent of the time on 13 issues that interested the U.S. directly, including resolutions relating to Cuba, the Israeli-Palestinian problem, North Korea and Iran. Thus, this seat is a result of Turkey's balanced foreign policy line. This seat will increase Turkey's influence regarding important decisions over the next two years." Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Turkey was elected as a non-permanent member to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This is a great success for Turkey and we owe a great thanks to Foreign Minister Babacan. Turkey's global lobbying efforts and its

constructive approach in the Middle East and the Caucasus contributed immensely to Turkey's success in this bid. It is very pleasing to see that Turkey received support from the EU as well. Recently, PM Erdogan said, 'Turkey is a country that is running after its targets and not its fears.' We should continue such efforts."

Nazli Ilicak wrote in mainstream Sabah: "Turkey's election to the UNSC membership is a great success. This success strengthens Turkey's influence, even with the isolated, small countries in the world. Congratulations to the President, the PM, and the FM, along with the architect of Turkey's foreign policy Prof. Davutoglu.

Ergenekon: The Trial of the Century Begins. (Zaman)
Media outlets are almost completely focused on the start of the Ergenekon trial in a sensationalist manner, with focus on Ergenekon's links to Turkey's most notorious assassinations and terrorist attacks. After Prime Minister Erdogan's statement of public support for the new Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Basbug, media are not reporting on the Ergenekon case as evidence of tensions between the military and the government. Islamist-oriented Zaman carries four full pages of reports connecting Ergenekon to the July 2008 attack against the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul, the Hrant Dink assassination, the shooting at the Danistay Court in 2006, as well as to the terrorist organizations, PKK and DHKP-C. Headlines from Zaman include, "The PKK is under Ergenekon's Control," and "(Ergenekon's) Leaves Their Signature on DHKP-C's Assassination of Sabanci," and "Ergenekon's Fingerprints are All Over the Danistay Assassinations," and "The

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Order for the Attack Against the (U.S.) Consulate Came from the Prison," where the chief Ergenekon suspects are being held. The suspects include the senior columnist of Cumhuriyet daily, Ilhan Selcuk, lawyer Kemal Kerincsiz, Turkish Labor Party chairman Dogu Perincek and the former Istanbul University Rector Kemal Alemdaroglu. They are accused of being members of an armed terrorist organization, supporting the terrorist organization, attempting to overthrow the Turkish Republic by using violence, and provoking the public toward an armed rebellion against the Turkish Republic's government. Mainstream Milliyet notes that even the reading of the 2455-page indictment during the hearing may take up to one month. Some of the suspects, including Kemal Kerincsiz and Dogu Perincek, will reportedly present 1000 and 1600-page written statements in their own defense. Mainstream Hurriyet notes that "there are three different points of view that are dividing the public on the Ergenekon case. AK Party circles take the case very seriously The CHP claims the case is an effort to annihilate the opposition. Many unions call the Ergenekon arrests 'attempts to oppress people and spread fear.' Many judicial experts draw the attention to the possibility of this case ending in a fiasco. They claim that dubious evidence based on private meetings and irrelevant telephone conversations has cast a shadow on the accuracy of the claims." Islamist-oriented Zaman thinks that "the case of the century begins" on its headline. Liberal Radikal notes, "Sixteen months ago it started with gangs and bombs found in Umraniye (a neighborhood in Istanbul) and now the Ergenekon probe includes retired generals, politicians, and underworld leaders". Radikal predicts "the first court proceedings will last for at least two months."

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet calls the Ergenekon investigation "part of the AKP's democratization program" and calls the trial "political" in nature. Cumhuriyet reminds readers of "The Greater Middle East Project" and the AKP's "moderate Islamist" aspirations and connects the AKP's pursuit of the Ergenekon case to those political aspirations. Oddly, mainstream Vatan focuses on the impending profits of the street vendors in Silivri, an Istanbul suburb, due to the Ergenekon case, which Vatan says "could last for one year." Radically Islamist Vakit carries the headline, "they will be held accountable."

Protests against the AKP/Pro-Ocalan Protests
Sunday's leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that the NGOs, Unions and some political parties arranged a meeting in Ankara on

Saturday to protest the AKP government's irregularities and policies in ruling the country. Thousands attended the meeting in Ankara and carried banners saying "We don't want the AKP" and "The AKP will pay for its wrong policies."

Sunday's Islamist-oriented Zaman and mainstream Hurriyet reported that PKK supporters staged protests in Diyarbakir, Adana and Mersin in connection with allegations that jailed PKK leader Ocalan became target of physical assaults in jail. Hurriyet notes that around 2,000 people attended the meeting organized by the DTP and some NGOs in Diyarbakir. The demonstrators attacked the police during the rally and the police had to use water cannons and teargas to disperse the crowd. There were clashes at the Adana and Mersin rallies as well. Very young children were used at the front line of the rallies. Today's mainstream Milliyet reports that there were more DTP arranged rallies in Istanbul, Sanliurfa and Antalya yesterday which all turned to pro-PKK/Ocalan meetings and children were used on the front line once again. DTP Igdir deputy Pervin Buldan addressed to 3,000 people in Kadikoy-Istanbul and called for a general amnesty. At the rally in Mersin DTP deputy chair Emine Ayna quoted as saying "the majority of the Kurds consider Ocalan as their leader. If there is a physical assault against Ocalan, they will consider this assault against themselves." Sabah reports that Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin denied allegations that jailed PKK leader Ocalan was maltreated.

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Meanwhile, Hurriyet internet site reported this morning that in Istanbul's Kadikoy neighborhood, early this morning, 34 cars were burned in arson attacks. No one claimed the attack so far.

Taraf's Interview with Author and Columnist Avni Ozgurel
Over the weekend leftist Taraf insisted that their reporting on the Aktutun raid by the PKK which caused 17 Turkish soldiers to die was accurate. The Turkish Chief of General Staff had claimed that the footage taken by an unmanned aerial vehicle and printed by Taraf indicated to a location within northern Iraq, and not Aktutun. Taraf on Sunday claimed that they had not indicated to the site as Aktutun, and that they also had described the location as the other side of the border in northern Iraq. Taraf insisted in their claims that the Turkish military was aware of this approaching attack and some military members watched it live during the actual attack and no measures were taken despite prior intelligence reports. Monday's Taraf has an interview with liberal-intellectual Radikal columnist and author on Turkish political history, Kurdish problem and terrorism Avni Ozgurel as their headline story. Ozgurel notes, "Those commanders responsible for the Aktutun raid must be tried at the military court. If the investigation, which the military says is being conducted, does not bring those responsible for this raid to court, it means that the situation is very hopeless in Turkey. The PKK is said to have been preparing for this attack for one month. Right after the attack the military said, 'The intelligence we get from the U.S. is excellent.' Yet, you don't get intelligence to write your memories! You get it to assess the incoming information. There is also the 'What if this terrorism finishes?' side of things. The PKK terrorism in Turkey today provides justification for many things for security officials. Terrorism is such a thing that it gives you the chance to control politics. There are arms dealers, politicians, military, security units, associations involved in the PKK terrorism. There's also drugs business involved. Terrorism is such a high-income thing that it is impossible to be finished for all sides. The Kurdish problem is not a security matter; it has to do with Turkey's democratization. If you democratize Turkey, you will neither have the headscarf nor the Kurdish problem. If the EU's democracy standards prevail in Turkey, the military cannot be in this position of not being accountable. All articles disturbing Kurds in judicial statements including the constitution should be rewritten. In addition, they should talk to Ocalan. No power in Turkey except for Ocalan can solve this matter..."
Editorial commentary on Taraf Accusations of the TAF
Oray Egin commented in mainstream Aksam: "Taraf daily has had only one objective since its first day of publication - to cause a coup in Turkey by making sure that their paper is raided. Even when there was no possibility or danger for a coup in Turkey, Taraf created the fears of a coup. The photographs that Taraf printed about the

Aktutun incident were proven to be lies. The paper aimed to damage the Turkish Armed Forces. When their news was refuted, they resorted to additional manipulation. Now they are trying to create fears that their paper is in danger. However, nobody is planning to raid or close Taraf. If someone does raid Taraf, the paper will seize the opportunity to blame the army."

President Gul's Interview with Der-Spiegel

Hurriyet, Milliyet: In an interview with German Der Spiegel, President Gul said "many Kurds suffered from discrimination in the past because of their origin and they were not allowed to speak and write in Kurdish. Today, there is a significant change. Kurds' cultural rights have been strengthened." Regarding the headscarf issue, President Gul said "Headscarf is related with Turkey's democratization process. It is the personal preference of a woman whether or not to wear a headscarf. Families do not create a problem. Problem emerges when the politicians try to make it a cultural matter."

Editorial commentary on the Kurdish Issue

Ali Bulac wrote in Islamist-oriented Zaman: ''I think that the present Kurdish problem may be solved by doing the following. 1)

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Kurdish identity must be recognized at every level. 2) Turkish must remain Turkey's official language, but education can be provided in native language such as Kurdish. 3) A Kurdish channel on TRT should begin functioning and allowing private TV broadcasts. 4) Respect for human rights must be obeyed fully. 5) A comprehensive amnesty should be implemented for those who have gone up the mountains but have not shed any blood. 6) Solid, permanent and real solutions must be found to solve the region's economic problems. 7) Civilian pressure must increase on media that seeks to provoke tensions between Turkish and Kurdish people. 8) Local and historic names should be returned to the Kurdish people. A system can be implemented that uses both Turkish and Kurdish names for villages, mountains, regions, streams, plains and individual's names. 9) Relations should be improved regarding tourism, trade, culture and commercial interests in Kurdish regions in other countries like Syria, Iraq, and Iran. 10) Local administrations should be strengthened. 11) The spirit of friendship and cooperation between all ethnic groups must be enhanced."

Iraqi Chief of General Staff's Exclusive with Hurriyet

Metehan Demir of mainstream Hurriyet interviewed the Iraqi Chief of General Staff Babakir Zibari. "The Iraqi Chief of General Staff said, 'Barzani would say yes to anything that Turkey says yes to, if only Ankara started talking to the Kurdish regional government. This change in stance could change everything, even the border.' General Babakir Zibari, who is of Kurdish origin, and who was appointed to his position as the Iraqi Chief of General Staff through the influence of Mesud Barzani, defended the idea that Turkey's solving the PKK problem depends first on its regarding the Kurdish regional administration warmly. General Zibari stated that even Barzani could approach warmly to the debated proposals in Turkey for moving the border or forming a buffer zone if Turkey discussed this with him because this could be beneficial for Barzani as well. Zibari noted, 'The PKK is continuously attacking like an animal squeezed in the corner at the moment. Turkey gave heavy blows to the PKK. In my opinion, a step must be taken for a political solution just at this point. The Turkish government must declare an amnesty for those up on the mountains.'"

TV News:

NTV Turk

Domestic News

- A Molotov cocktail attack was launched against Turkish Consulate in Austria. Minor material damage was reported.
- DSP Leader Zeki Sezer said they could support Murat Karayalcin if he decides to run for Ankara Mayor as an independent candidate.
- Responding to a question whether a new stand-by agreement will be signed with the IMF, Finance Minister Unakitan said "we never turn

our back on the IMF. If the country's interests require a new agreement, then we will do what is necessary."

- The AKP Branch Office in Semdinli was damaged in bomb blast.

International News

- Democratic Presidential candidate Barack Obama raises more than \$150 million for his campaign against McCain.

- Taliban insurgents pulled some 50 passengers off a bus in southern Afghanistan and killed as many as 30 of them.

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